Chapter V

EMERGENT EVOLUTION AND HYLOZOISM

NEXT IN order in our rapid review must come, I think, the now so popular doctrine of emergent evolution. Many authors have contributed to it, and many more have subscribed to it in a general way. But not all accept it in the same sense. In its most restricted sense it seems to be nothing more than the application of the *Gestalt* principle in the field of evolutionary theory, the principle that a whole may be (and, if it is a true whole, always is) other than and more than the sum of its parts. It is the formal rejection of the merely additive mode of description. As such it is clearly valid in the inorganic as w[r]ell as the organic realm. When a planetary system is said to evolve from a nebula, the resulting system is not just the sun plus all its satellites: it is a system more or less isolated from others, and each member contributes something to the nature of the w[r]hole; and in turn each member owes something of its own nature and behaviour to the influence of the whole and to the forces contributed by its fellow members as parts. Many other examples of the holistic principle in this its most restricted senses might be cited: the soap-bubble again and the net; and in the organic realm, most obviously and indisputably, colonial organisms in which individuals cohere and become specialized to subserve

different functions, each contributing some essential service to the whole group. In the social sphere we see something very similar: